



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER OF PATENTS AND TRADEMARKS
Washington, D.C. 20231
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/841,284	04/24/2001	Harold J. Vinegar	5659-06000/EBM	4716

7590 04/08/2002

DEL CHRISTENSEN
SHELL OIL COMPANY
P.O. BOX 2463
HOUSTON, TX 77252-2463

EXAMINER

SUCHFIELD, GEORGE A

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

3672

DATE MAILED: 04/08/2002

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.
09/841,284

Applicant(s)
Vinegar et al

Examiner
George Suchfield

Art Unit
3672



-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 1 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136 (a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on Feb 12, 2002
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11; 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 2193-2308 and 5081-5100 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above, claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☒ Claims 2193-2308 and 5081-5100 are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are objected to by the Examiner.
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgement is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- *See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgement is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e).

Attachment(s)

- 15) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 18) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
- 16) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 19) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 17) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s). _____ 20) ☐ Other: _____

Art Unit: 3672

1. Restriction to one of the following inventions is required under 35 U.S.C. 121:

- I. Claims 2193-2269 and 5081-5090, drawn to a method of increasing the permeability of a coal formation, classified in class 166, subclass 308.
- II. Claims 2270-2308, drawn to a method of increasing the porosity of a coal formation, classified in class 166, subclass 302.
- III. Claims 5091-5100, drawn to a method of pyrolyzing and recovering hydrocarbons from a coal formation, classified in class 166, subclass 302.

2. The inventions are distinct, each from the other because of the following reasons:

Inventions I, II and III are related as subcombinations disclosed as usable together in a single combination. The subcombinations are distinct from each other if they are shown to be separately usable. In the instant case, invention III has separate utility such as in a coal formation penetrated by horizontal wells and/or access tunnels, i.e., not requiring steps of increasing the permeability or porosity of the coal formation. Also, invention I could be practiced to increase the permeability, e.g., by fracturing without necessarily increasing the pore space or porosity. See MPEP § 806.05(d).

3. Because these inventions are distinct for the reasons given above and have acquired a separate status in the art as shown by their different classification, restriction for examination purposes as indicated is proper.

Art Unit: 3672

4. Because these inventions are distinct for the reasons given above and have acquired a separate status in the art because of their recognized divergent subject matter, restriction for examination purposes as indicated is proper.

5. This application contains claims directed to the following patentably distinct species of the claimed invention:

A. Heating a coal formation using an electrical heater(s). Claims 2196, 2235, and 2273 exemplify this species.

B. Heating a coal formation using surface burners. Claims 2197, 2236 and 2274 exemplify this species.

C. Heating a coal formation using a flameless distributed combustor(s). Claims 2198, 2237 and 2275 exemplify this species.

D. Heating a coal formation using a natural distributed combustor. Claims 2199, 2238 and 2276 exemplify this species.

Applicant is required under 35 U.S.C. 121 to elect a single disclosed species for prosecution on the merits to which the claims shall be restricted if no generic claim is finally held to be allowable. Currently, claims 2193-2195, 2200-2234, 2239-2272, 2277-2308, and 5081-5100 are generic.

Applicant is advised that a reply to this requirement must include an identification of the species that is elected consonant with this requirement, and a listing of all claims readable thereon,

Art Unit: 3672

including any claims subsequently added. An argument that a claim is allowable or that all claims are generic is considered nonresponsive unless accompanied by an election.

Upon the allowance of a generic claim, applicant will be entitled to consideration of claims to additional species which are written in dependent form or otherwise include all the limitations of an allowed generic claim as provided by 37 CFR 1.141. If claims are added after the election, applicant must indicate which are readable upon the elected species. MPEP § 809.02(a).

Should applicant traverse on the ground that the species are not patentably distinct, applicant should submit evidence or identify such evidence now of record showing the species to be obvious variants or clearly admit on the record that this is the case. In either instance, if the examiner finds one of the inventions unpatentable over the prior art, the evidence or admission may be used in a rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) of the other invention.

6. Applicant is advised that the reply to this requirement to be complete must include an election of the invention to be examined even though the requirement be traversed (37 CFR 1.143).

7. Applicant is reminded that upon the cancellation of claims to a non-elected invention, the inventorship must be amended in compliance with 37 CFR 1.48(b) if one or more of the currently named inventors is no longer an inventor of at least one claim remaining in the application. Any amendment of inventorship must be accompanied by a petition under 37 CFR 1.48(b) and by the fee required under 37 CFR 1.17(I).

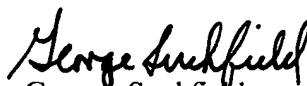
Art Unit: 3672

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to George Suchfield whose telephone number is (703) 308-2152, and is normally in the Office Monday through Friday, from 6:30 AM until 3:00 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, David Bagnell, can be reached on (703) 308-2151. The fax phone number for this Group is (703) 305-3597, (703) 305-7687 or (703) 306-4195.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application should be directed to the Group receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-2168.

gs/Suchfield
April 5, 2002


George Suchfield
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3672